



ARTS & CULTURE

What Is the Most Popular Ethnic Food in the US?

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For years, the United States has been called a melting pot – a place where different individuals or groups of people are mixed together. And the country's food **preferences** show that.

Many Americans learn about and enjoy different cultures through food. One study shows that Mexican food is the most popular ethnic food in the largest number of states. It is especially popular on the U.S. West Coast. But Chinese food is the top ethnic food nationwide.

“Both **cuisines** have a rich history connected to the large immigrant Chinese and Mexican populations in the U.S.” notes Georgie Mihaila. She is with a food-based blog called Chef's Pencil.

The website was the idea of **professional** chefs, the men and women who prepare meals for top restaurants. It used information from Google's search engine to identify the most popular ethnic food in the country.

Mihaila said that as generations of immigrants settled in the U.S., they made their food more readily available -- and less costly.

Thai, Korean, Vietnamese and Japanese restaurants are also gaining fans across the country. Their popularity is no accident, either.

In 2002, for example, Thailand's government started training chefs and sending them out to share their cuisine with the world. The aim of the "Global Thai" **culinary** diplomacy program was to increase the number of Thai restaurants worldwide.

Millennials are leading the push for more diverse food experiences. Millennials are now the nation's largest age group. They are generally between the ages of 26 and 40. And they are likely to share their eating experiences on social media.

"It's not just about the food, but also the atmosphere, the culture, about ...experiencing something fun and memorable," Mihaila said.

In general, she added, Americans are making more **adventurous** food choices.

"Many of them are seeking new experiences, both when dining out and when cooking for themselves," she said. "I think the **pandemic** was a great example of that with people trying out more foods that they would cook at home."

Often, Chinese, Mexican and other ethnic food restaurants are less pricey than other eateries.

But that is also changing.

Mihaila said, "You have restaurants opening up across the country that are serving ethnic foods like Mexican, Thai or Indian, that are positioned to serve the upper end of the market."

Such businesses, she added, have seen great success.

I'm Ashley Thompson.

Dora Mekouar reported this story for VOANews.com. Ashley Thompson adapted it for Learning English. George Grow was the editor.

What is your favorite cuisine? We want to hear from you. Write to us in the Comments Section.

Words in This Story

preference - n. a feeling of liking or wanting one person or thing more than another person or thing

cuisine - n. a style of cooking

professional - adj. relating to a job that requires special education, training, or skill

global - adj. involving the entire world

culinary - adj. used in or relating to cooking

adventurous - adj. not afraid to do new and dangerous or exciting things

pandemic - n. an occurrence in which a disease spreads very quickly and affects a large number of people over a wide area or throughout the world
